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Can You Identify a Grizzly Bear?

Black Bear

No hump

Straight face profile



Shorter, darker claws

Black front track



Black back track



Rounded heel

Wedge in instep

Claws



Front toe claw of black bear

Front toe claw of grizzly bear

Color and size are sometimes misleading

Claws of adult grizzlies are rarely less than 1 3/4" long. Claws of black bears seldom exceed 1 1/2".



Grizzly Bear

Dished face profile

Hump



Long, lighter claws



Grizzly front track



Grizzly back track

No wedge in instep

Pointed heel

Look for a combination of several characteristics

Grizzly Bear Recovery in the North Cascades



What You Should Know

For more information or to get on the mailing list, contact:

North Cascades
Grizzly Bear Steering Committee
Washington Department of Wildlife
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Background

There were once more than 50,000 grizzly bears in the western United States, but today fewer than 900 remain in Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, and Washington. Biologists are uncertain of how many grizzly bears once inhabited the North Cascades, but they know 425 grizzly bear pelts were turned in to Hudson's Bay Company forts in the North Cascades from 1846 to 1851.

The grizzly bear is federally listed as a threatened species throughout the lower 48 states and as an endangered species by the Washington Department of Wildlife. In Canada, the grizzly bear is designated as vulnerable, which means they require special management consideration.

The Endangered Species Act requires that federal and state agencies act to protect and recover threatened or endangered species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the federal agency which administers the Act.

The Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee was formed in 1983 to coordinate recovery of the grizzly bear in Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, and Washington. Members of the committee are regional and state directors of the Forest Service, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, wildlife agencies of the four states and Canadian management authorities. These officials review grizzly bear issues and make recommendations to the Fish and Wildlife Service on recovery activities.

Grizzly bears and their habitat in the Canadian portion of recovery areas are important to recovery in the United States. Canadian authorities cooperatively manage grizzly bears in these areas and assist in recovery efforts.

The Fish and Wildlife Service approved the first recovery plan for grizzly bears in 1982. The plan is currently being updated, as required by the Endangered Species Act and is to be completed in 1992. The plan addresses management of grizzly bears in six ecosystems: the Yellowstone, Northern Continental Divide,

Cabinet-Yaak, Selkirks, North Cascades and Bitterroot. Four of the ecosystems were established as recovery areas in the 1982 plan. Recovery areas were not established for the North Cascades and the Bitterroots in the 1982 plan because information was limited on the grizzly bear population and habitat for these areas.



The Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee directed interagency working groups in the North Cascades and Bitterroots to evaluate the ecosystems to determine if they could support viable populations of grizzly bears. Biologists conducted the evaluations from 1986 to 1991. An independent team of grizzly bear biologists evaluated the study results. They concluded that the areas were capable of supporting viable grizzly bear populations and that a small number of grizzly bears currently exist in the North Cascades ecosystem.

The Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee agreed with the conclusions of the study. In December 1991, according to the requirements of the Endangered Species Act, the committee recommended that the Fish and Wildlife Service pursue recovery of the grizzly bear in both the North Cascades and the Bitterroots. They appointed working groups to develop a recovery plan chapter for each ecosystem and to involve the public in the process.

What is a grizzly bear recovery plan?

The recovery plan for the grizzly bear outlines the actions necessary for the conservation and recovery of the bear. The plan:

- 1) identifies population objectives, habitat needs, management and tasks necessary to achieve recovery,
- 2) establishes recovery zone boundaries, and
- 3) defines a monitoring program to determine when recovery has been achieved so that the species will no longer require protection under the Endangered Species Act.

The recovery plan is used to tailor land management efforts of government agencies to achieve grizzly bear recovery. Examples of management activities that may be included are road use, timber harvest, mining, oil exploration, recreational use and law enforcement.

What is the recovery plan chapter for the North Cascades?

The Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan currently contains four chapters, one for each of the recovery areas. Now that a decision has been made to pursue recovery in the North Cascades, a chapter will be prepared specifically for this area. When completed, it will be appended to the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan.

Who will write the recovery plan chapter?

A team of wildlife biologists will draft the recovery plan chapter. The North Cascades Grizzly Bear Steering Committee will direct the effort. The Washington Department of Wildlife chairs the committee, which includes representatives from the Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, National Park Service and the British Columbia Ministry of Environment.

How will the public be involved?

A comprehensive public involvement effort is underway. Public meetings will be held to solicit concerns and ideas. A citizens' involvement group, representing a cross-section of interests, will work with the Steering Committee to assure that the full range of public concerns are explored. Issues and concerns identified during this process will be addressed in the draft chapter or in supplementary documents. There will be further opportunity to become involved after the chapter is drafted.

What is the process to complete the chapter?

The draft chapter will be circulated for public comments. Public meetings will be held to solicit comments. It will then be revised, if necessary, and sent to the Interagency Grizzly

Bear Committee for review. The Fish and Wildlife Service has the responsibility for final approval. When approved, the chapter will be appended to the revised Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan.

How long will the process take?

It will take at least 12 to 18 months to develop the draft chapter and circulate it for public comments, make revisions and submit them for approval. It is expected to be completed in 1993.

Does recovery mean that grizzly bears will be moved into the North Cascades?

Grizzly bears have never been moved into the North Cascades. Adding animals to an existing population is a tool sometimes used to recover listed species. This, and other conservation strategies will be evaluated as part of the recovery plan process. The primary benefit is the introduction of new animals to the gene pool to offset the harmful effects of inbreeding in small populations.

How can you get involved?

You can attend public meetings to become informed on the process and to identify issues that are important to you. You can get on a mailing list to receive information, including a newsletter to keep you informed of progress and public meeting dates.

North Cascades Grizzly Bear Steering Committee:

- Washington Department of Wildlife
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- National Park Service
- B.C. Ministry of the Environment

Grizzly bears are protected under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act. It is illegal to "take" grizzly bears except under special circumstances such as in defense of human life. "Take" means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in such conduct. Similarly, possessing parts of grizzly bears is prohibited. Violation of the Endangered Species Act can result in a fine of up to \$50,000 and/or a year in prison.